

Letter from Mabel Hubbard Bell to Alexander Graham Bell, June 17, 1895, with transcript

Letter from Mrs. Alexander Graham Bell to Dr. Alexander Graham Bell Paris, France. (on envelope June 17, 1895.) My darling Alec:

Yesterday morning being the children's holiday I took them to the Jardin de Acclimation to the riding school there and sent them out for an hour's ride. They had a good time cantering under the trees in the Bois de Boulogne and I think are both all the better for their little spree. It was however more expensive than I anticipated and we have had to economize. So I walked down to the Salon in the afternoon and today we walked to the Jardin again and walked home from the gate of the Bois. Pretty long walks all of them, but it is so cool that we are only the better for the exercise. We meant to take the tiny miniature train from the Bois gate to the garden, but when we got there we found such a long lane of people waiting their turn to ride that we thought it hopeless to join in and so we walked. We went slowly under the dense shade of the trees, passing many a family group making themselves very much at home on the grass. I saw one lady reading the paper while her husband slept with his red face in her lap. Further on a wife was mending a hole in the seat of her man's trousers! Truly the French are children of nature and feel no false shame.

Close by the box office of the garden, through which a dense crowd was pouring, a mother openly nursed her child. I couldn't see why she might not have found a more retired spot.

2

Mrs. Mauro and her family joined us and we walked slowly through the beautiful winter garden and out among the monkeys. I can't say I like them. I thought of you, but the specimens we saw were simply hideous. There were some individuals called "singes", well I have looked it up and it only means monkey. But these had great long hairy capes, much

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like those we ladies wear. They also had what might be called fur heads, the grey hair sticking out on either side their faces. Their little eyes were fixed in a sharp shelf and their noses were like pigs snouts. I don't see how they should yet look unpleasantly human. Here is an attempt at their profile. They gave most tremendous yawns showing immense canine teeth.

The children had camel rides and eat "goffs", drank milk and we sat around and walked until it was time to go home and then we found that almost everybody else thought so too and there was an immense number of people waiting for the trams, which are really large dolls horse-cars with places for twelve people, six on each side, back to back, their feet on a platform about three inches above ground. No overcrowding of course is allowed and we had to wait until one set of cars had gone to the gate and returned before we were allowed on board. From the gate we walked home feeling very virtuous.

I had a cable from Papa yesterday, or rather I had two. The first might have been sent by you, but I certainly never expected Papa to display such a reckless disregard for pennies in his choice of words. It was addressed to me in full and signed Gardiner G. Hubbard and said "Will you please let me know your address", when he could have said the same message and as politely in four words. I replied and presently came another cable saying "All progressing well plans undecided". But why couldn't Papa have sent that message with the first. I think he must simply have asked somebody to telephone to have a cable sent me asking my address and that this was the result. If so he will be surprised at the size of his telegraph bill.

I want you to come over if you can anyway because of the good your presence here away from your home interests will do for children. I am enjoying being with them very much and want you to share my pleasure. Now I am all in all to them and they seem happy and content in my company. They are still children, obedient to my will, yet old enough to have opinions of their own and individuality enough to be very interesting. They never again will be in the condition they now are, willing to submit themselves unreservedly to

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my judgment and desiring no other companionship. By and by they will think their way as good as mine and other companionship pleasanter. They will therefore never again be so absolutely our own. While they are in this state, still obedient children, but intelligent, appreciative women, I want you to be with them. The school here closes July 15th. I would like them to have a month in a French family and then a month traveling with you. So if you could be here about the middle of August that would be very nice.

Elsie is very much pleased, she says she can sing three octaves. Her teacher is very bright and works well.

I have nothing new to communicate, so goodnight. I was disappointed that no letter came last night. One letter a week is rather a short allowance. Please send short notes and don't keep your letters from day to day.

Ever yours (Enclosed was clipping "What the doctors say about bicycling") for Mr McCurdy.